

SC034900

Registered provider: Nottingham City Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is registered to provide short breaks for up to 11 children and young people at any one time. It is owned and run by the local authority. The home provides short breaks for children and young people who have learning disabilities and/or physical disabilities.

Inspection dates: 21 to 22 November 2017

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **outstanding**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **outstanding**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **outstanding**

The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

Date of last inspection: 28 March 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: improved effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection:

None

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is outstanding because:

- Children and young people get to spend quality time with their peers and engage in fun activities and holidays during their stays in this home. This increases their confidence and sense of worth.
- Children and young people form very close and positive attachments to staff and managers. The staff team acts as a very positive advocate for them, as well as for family members.
- The staff team is extremely passionate about its work and in wanting children and young people to have the best possible short-break stays. The staff members go above and beyond their roles to ensure that children and young people receive the best possible care and support. This extends to supporting family members to an exceptionally high level as well.
- Staff feel very well supported and valued by managers. They feel able to share their views and ideas, and are confident that they will be acted upon by managers. They receive excellent supervision, training and development opportunities and staff retention is very good.
- Research-informed practice is embedded in all aspects of the services provided. Managers and staff place a strong focus on this and ensure that information is shared with family members and carers.
- Staff and managers provide excellent support to young people during their transition from this service. They work with family members and involved agencies closely, to ensure that future services can meet the complex needs of each young person.
- Staff and managers work closely with the local community and have engendered a very positive relationship over time between the home and local people. Children and young people feel fully involved and accepted in the local and wider community.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
28/03/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
19/12/2016	Full	Outstanding
27/01/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
23/09/2015	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

'You have shown me nothing but kindness, never judging me and always accepting me.' This statement, from a young person who was due to move on, reflects the views of not only children and young people, but their family members and carers. Children and young people feel important, special and valued. They love coming for their short-break stays and see it as a very important part of their lives.

As one headteacher said: 'Most other children get to have sleepovers at their friends' homes. This service provides our children with those opportunities. It is invaluable and I wish there were more services like it.' Children and young people enjoy experiences and opportunities which they may otherwise not have. One young person went on holiday this year for the first time. This was not felt possible or safe before, because of concerns about their behaviour. Staff undertook robust risk assessment and planning. The young person had the most amazing holiday and speaks about it with great happiness and joy.

Staff enable children and young people to take age-appropriate risks and to try out new things. This increases their confidence and self-esteem. Parents and carers also value this greatly. They see how staff manage and support their children to try new things and then feel able to do the same at home. An extensive range of activities and planned holidays takes place. Children and young people have taken part in such things as:

- canal-boat holidays
- organised bike rides
- holidays to the seaside
- fundraising events within the local community
- being part of interview panels for new staff
- awards ceremonies within the local authority.

Children and young people receive excellent healthcare support. Staff receive specific training, which enables them to meet the often complex health needs of children and young people. A nurse provides training and regular support to staff. Staff advocate to ensure that the health needs of children and young people are known and met. One member of staff has advocated for over two years on behalf of one young person and challenged agencies and professionals. This has resulted in specialist health services now being provided for them. This reflects a staff team which shows a total commitment to ensuring that the physical and emotional health needs of children and young people are met.

Staff and managers work closely and very proactively with education providers. There is daily communication between both settings. This enables clear and accurate information-sharing to take place. Teaching staff cannot praise the staff and managers enough. They feel that there is a real learning culture evident. They report that staff attend all relevant education meetings and reviews. They provide detailed reports and accounts of what children and young people have done during their short-break stays. Staff also ensure

that educationally set targets are incorporated into the short-break care and outcome plans.

An outreach team also provides support to both those currently receiving a short-break service and others. This is an extremely important and valuable service. It provides families/carers with much-needed support and advice for their children at times of crisis. This may involve workers from the service making home visits or inviting family/carers to come in. As one outreach worker stated: 'There is no doubt in my mind that such support has prevented family breakdowns and enabled them to continue to care for their children at home.'

Young people receive excellent support to prepare them for transitions to adult services. A young person will often have been coming for short breaks for several years. Staff know them extremely well and provide invaluable information and advice to new service providers. The quality of transition and behaviour support plans is excellent. They reflect the detailed awareness and understanding staff have of a young person's needs and how best to meet those needs. They clearly include young people in devising such plans and reflect their personalities and views. Staff have gone above and beyond to support young people's transitions. This includes coming into work on their days off to support appointments or visits. They also support family members and carers extremely well during transitions, supporting them on visits to new services and making home visits to ensure that they have emotional and practical help.

Children and young people make exceptional progress from their starting points. Case records reflect targets set and how these have been achieved. Such achievements include:

- one young person now being able to spend time alone in their bedroom, when previously they required constant staff supervision
- developing self-care skills and improved sleep and bedtime routines
- young people developing the confidence to take part in interviews of new staff for the home with managers
- children and young people being able to take part in activities and/or holidays, which would previously have not been felt possible by staff or family members/carers.

Managers have firmly embedded research-informed practice into the services provided. Renowned experts have been invited to give speeches to staff and family members. Managers also recently invited the local police to attend a speech on autistic spectrum disorder. Parents and carers can access the home's website, where research information, videos and articles are uploaded for them to consider. Reflective practice has been embedded into staff supervision and team meetings. This is in order for staff to consider significant events or issues and agree learning with managers.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: outstanding

Staff display hugely detailed awareness and understanding of the complex needs of and risks for children and young people accessing the service. High staffing levels and supervision provide security and safety at all times. Staff also support young people to consider their own safety needs. This has included specific pieces of work being done on such areas as social media and internet safety. Young people learn how to manage social situations and contacts with more confidence and awareness as a result of such work.

There have been no reported incidents of children or young people going missing from the home. This is a result of the excellent missing from care risk assessments in place and supervision by staff. Clear plans set out the expectations of all staff in supervising and supporting children and young people, both within the home and when out on activities or holidays. Parents and placing social workers report extremely high levels of satisfaction at how safe children and young people are kept by staff.

Staff understand the complex behaviours and responses of children and young people very well. They consider their current and changing needs and respond accordingly. They demonstrate a commendable commitment to ensuring that children and young people feel safe and supported at times of emotional crisis or anxiety. They respond flexibly and sensitively to each child's/young person's needs. The use of physical intervention is minimal. This reflects the huge skill of staff in being able to de-escalate and divert children/young people, and to regulate any actually or potentially risky or dangerous behaviours.

Staff have undertaken a range of training and development opportunities on radicalisation and extremism. They fully accept and appreciate the particular vulnerabilities of the children and young people who access the service. There is no complacency within the staff and management team to the risks posed to their service users. They consider and look out for any signs of concern and have the confidence to report them to placing social workers, the police and other relevant agencies.

There is a zero tolerance policy to bullying and any forms of discrimination. Staff and managers diligently ensure that any concerning behaviours or actions are responded to promptly. They share any concerns with parents/carers and placing social workers. They work to resolve any issues in a very timely manner.

The recruitment and selection of staff is robust and prevents unsuitable adults from being able to harm children or place them at risk. The registered managers have excellent systems in place to ensure that all necessary checks are undertaken and recorded. Young people have also routinely been involved in interview panels for new staff. This enables them to consider whom they would like to work in the home and to comment on applicants. This is an extremely positive and proactive means of further ensuring that only the most suitable people work in this home.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The two registered managers provide exceptional leadership, support and vision to staff. They constantly strive to improve the services and the support they provide for children, young people and their parents/carers. They are very 'hands-on' managers, who have each worked at this home for many years.

They both have the necessary skills, experience and qualifications to perform the role. One of the managers is currently studying for a master's degree. His dissertation relates to fathers of children who have autistic spectrum disorder. As part of his studies, he is working with a number of fathers whose children use the service. This is further evidence of the outstanding focus on research-informed practice, which permeates all aspects of the work done in this home.

As both managers have worked in this home for so long, they demonstrate an inspiring understanding of the children and young people and their changing needs. They encourage children and young people to come and spend time with them in their offices, they do shifts to support staff and meet regularly with parents. All parents and agencies refer to the excellent leadership and management skills and support provided. Staff similarly love working in this home and working for their managers. As one member of staff stated: 'This is the best management team we have had, they are intelligent managers. They know the children well and really care about them and us.'

Staff and managers take huge pride in their work. They clearly feel very passionately about their roles and the children and young people they support. Staff retention is excellent. Staff go above and beyond their roles constantly to make sure that children and young people have the best possible experiences. They relate the journey of each child with confidence and pride. They also know family members/carers extremely well and offer them the same level of dedicated support.

Managers have clear and detailed development plans in place. Children and young people significantly influence such plans and their views and suggestions form a large part of the plans. This includes how they have influenced the decor of the bedrooms, as well as the recent introduction of a sensory pod in the garden. Managers and staff listen to the children and act on their wishes and views, wherever possible.

Agencies report extremely positive and close working relationships with managers and staff. They have a real sense of the staff team striving continually to improve what it does and celebrating the successes of the children and young people, no matter how small. Managers and staff considered the fact that children and young people who have disabilities do not routinely receive post at home. They have ensured that they send out letters, invitations to events and other information to them at home. This makes children and young people feel valued and the same as peers and family members. It increases their sense of belonging and being valued.

The statement of purpose clearly sets out the aims and objectives of the service and is closely adhered to. Each child and young person receives a guide when they start using

the service. There is an excellent website, which parents and their children can access. This provides photos and details of all staff and managers. It also includes excellent information and resources for family members/carers to consider.

A parent/carer group is now well established and meets regularly. This provides parents and carers with invaluable time-out and an opportunity to share their thoughts and feelings with others. As one parent said: 'As a single parent, the groups have been a complete lifeline to me. I can come and let off steam, I don't feel judged and this is my time to not feel so alone in my caring role.'

A diverse group of children and young people access this service. Managers and staff work very hard to consider cultural, religious, dietary and other needs. There is very careful consideration of the matching of children and young people for each stay. The staff team fully takes into consideration the known risks and needs of each child when agreeing the visits. They fully consult with parents/carers and children and young people to elicit their needs and how best to meet them.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

Using the 'Social care common inspection framework', this inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, and to consider how well it complies with the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC034900

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: Nottingham City Council, Loxley House, Station Street, Nottingham NG2 3NG

Responsible individual: Kay Sutt

Registered managers: Joanne Wright and Peter Corkhill

Inspector

Tracy Murty, social care inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: <http://www.gov.uk/ofsted>

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